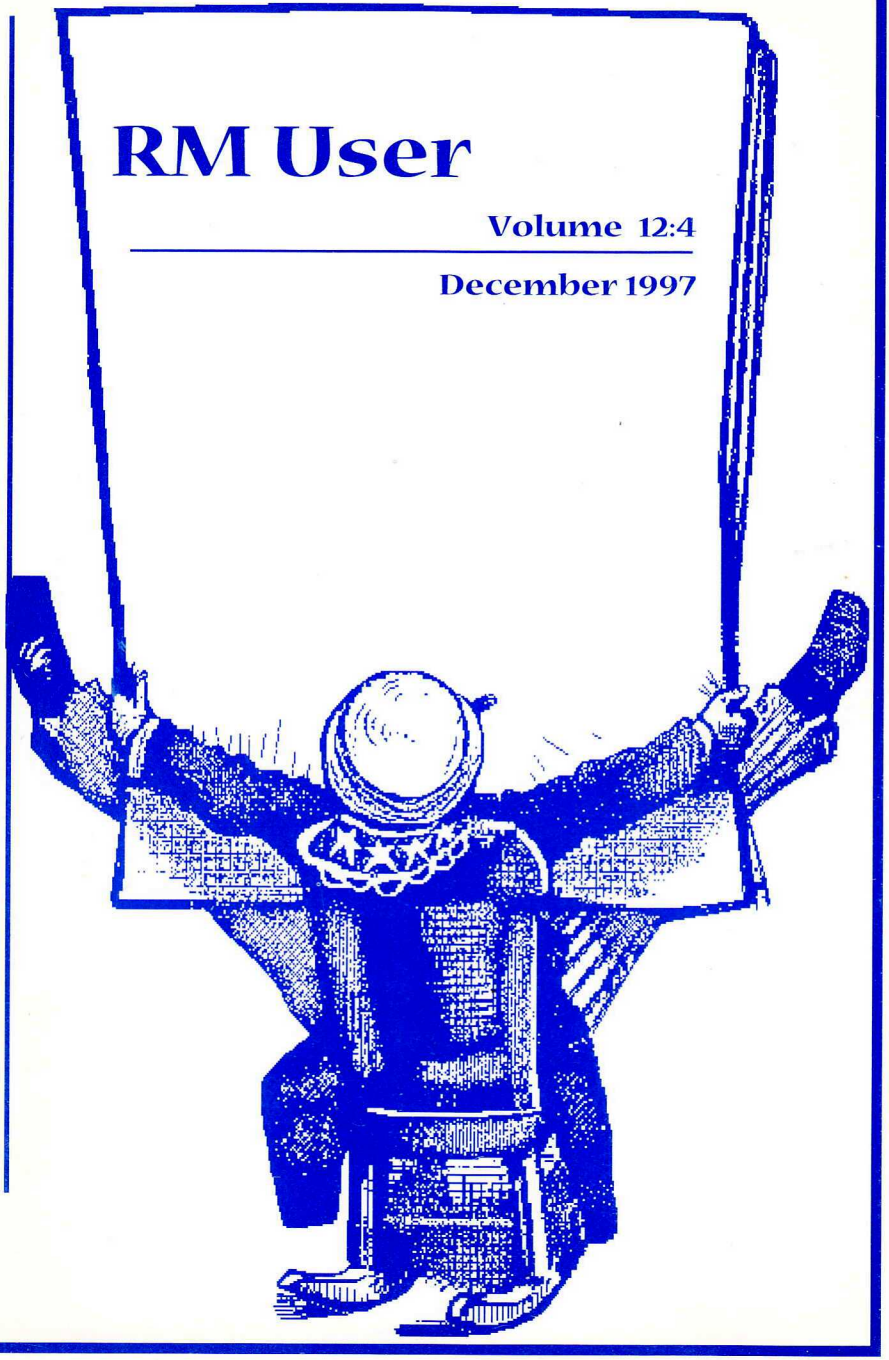
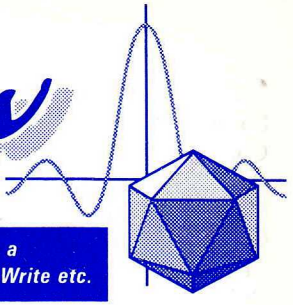
RM User

Volume 12:4

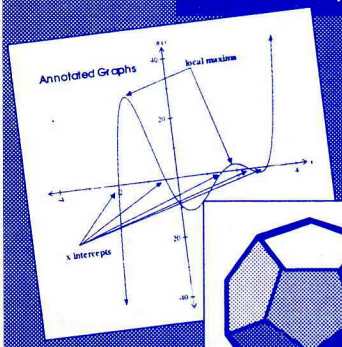
December 1997

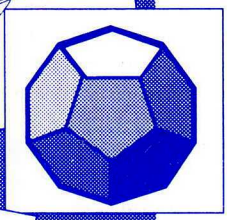


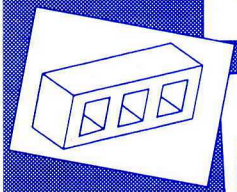
FX Draw

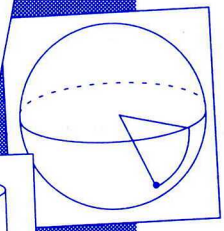


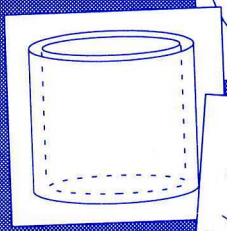
Available for IBM (Windows 3.1 or later) Requires a Windows word processor, eg MS Word, Windows Write etc.

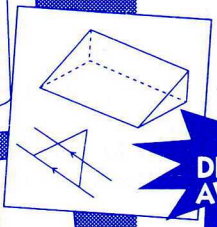


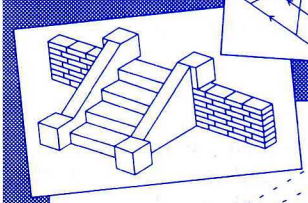


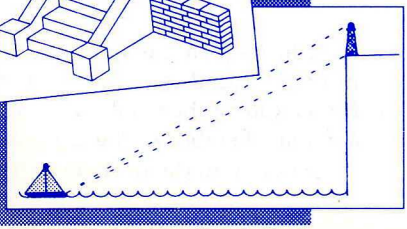












FX Draw is a drawing package designed for mathematics. You can draw almost any required mathematical diagram with a minimum amount of input from yourself.

There are tools for drawing angles, graphs, normal distribution curves, Venn diagrams, right-angled triangles and a host more. FX Draw is an OLE object, and fits seamlessly into any Windows word processor, such as Microsoft Word. Your diagrams will be inserted into your document and appear on your screen as they will appear when printed. The diagrams can be moved, resized and edited from within your document.

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Deadlines for the next issues

RM User 12.5 ..... 20 December 1997
RM User 12.6 ..... 20 January 1998

The date shown above is the *latest* date for copy for the magazine. You will normally receive the magazine about 2-3 weeks after the date shown.

Missing a Magazine?

Back issues of the magazine are available from the editor - please contact me for more details. I am delighted to announce that through the kind assistance of Tim Clark, we now have the URL www.rmug.org.uk. Diana Rolf has been helping to re-organise the site and I am sure she will be grateful for any feedback. There is a list of phone numbers of the suppliers who have been reviewed in the past, contents pages and a few articles.

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Advertising in the Magazine

Full and half page advertisements can be placed in the magazine and details can be obtained from the Advertising Manager. We also take classified ads and members may place free ads for surplus equipment in MicroMart.

Rates

Back Cover £60 Inside Cover £50 Full Page £30 Half Page £20

These rates assume black-on-white, camera ready copy. Please avoid dot-matrix output. Typesetting is charged at cost and is additional to the above rates. Please make cheques payable to *RM User Group*

NEWS AND EDITORIAL

Latest News

At the AGM (report in next issue), it was decided that we had to go to 3 issues a year. One alternative is to get more members - any ideas???? Your feedback (to any member of the committee) would be appreciated. Our website is online at www.rmug.org.uk, thanks to Tim Clark at RMiFL, again, please let us know what you think and how it could develop.

Who buys what

I have always thought the whole computer market very strange - the way that some areas are heavily competitive while others have no diversity at all. I guess part of my frustration is that it seems so hard to get them to listen. A particular example is the digital camera. It seems to me that there is almost a unique model for every potential customer. While some (definitely not all) of them may be nice bits of kit, how big can the market possibly be? I am experimenting with a video camera and a video input board and I suspect it will be able to do everything I need.

WWWarnings

(i) You may want to put a disclaimer on your website if you have links to other sites, eg Please note that all links to external sites have been placed here in good faith to pages that may be changed and such links do not indicate support of other causes.

{ii} One of the famous hacker sites is promoting a program called revelation which can show win95 passwords.

I couldn't make it up

Every so often everything seems (to me) to slow down. Then, as dramatically as a couple of tectonic plates giving each other the shoulder, it all picks up speed again. I had been phoneless for 8 weeks as I waited for a router for my ISDN line. I now have the RM/Cisco router - but without analogue ports - it's coming, real soon now! Fortunately, the excellent people at Electronic Frontier (01734 810600) sent me some of the boxes they have been promoting to do some serious ISDN price-busting to review and one has allowed me to communicate again. The s/w that comes with it is mindblowing. As well as all the voicemail stuff you might expect, there is a remote operator service that I could use to make calls from home through my work phone.

The future

At the same time I got a review of a new I-phone which functions as a 'regular' phone. It also has an LCD touch-screen which you can use to browse the internet. The suppliers have used the same cunning as Tel-Me and fixed their modems and caching systems so that (a) the handshaking is almost instantaneous and (b) the files sent to you are already reduced to the appropriate colour level and so are smaller and faster. If you need more detailed input - maybe for your email - there is a keyboard tucked underneath where you normally have a reminder sheet. When I saw it I could really see how the internet could reach so many more people. I prefer to check train

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times on the web but not if I am in a hurry. With the I-phone, I could have almost instant access to this (and other) data in a practical way. I can't wait to get hold of one!

3D Worlds

Another thing I think we will see more of is virtual worlds. I have been trying all term to get our virtual model of Ackworth onto the internet - but it is hard work! We have been sponsored by Virtus in the USA who sent us a copy of their 3d Website Builder which is a good program (you can visit www.virtus.com). Then a very nice man called Martin Robinson from Themekit (07000 843 635) sent something called VREK (check www.themekit.com for free viewers and models). An interesting angle here is that this supports the use of various VR kit and he sent over some SIMULEYES which you wear like hi-tech sunglasses and which use a kind of stereoscopic strobing to get a 3D depth. Watch this space for more details in the next issue - or, even better, let me know of your own experiences.

Mischief

I must confess to being very naughty. For the last few weeks, when a user admits to forgetting their password, I have told them that their password has been reset to 'diarrhoea'! I am quite sure that Ackworth now has one of the highest concentrations of population who actually know how to spell it. One of the dangers of working with computers so much is that you start to act like them ... What a ridiculous idea!! . . . or maybe . . . have you ever had the feeling "Insufficient memory to complete the task"?? I am wondering if the process can work the other way and if so, what is the computer equivalent for a condition that seems to me to be quite common among IT managers of losing hair where you want it to grow - and it growing abundantly where you don't!!

NetLM Tools

One of my students showed me how the use of Netscape (or any browser) could create security problems. He then went on to develop a security system (poacher>gamekeeper) and wants to offer it as shareware. In the process he came up with some other programs, notably a student file manager which is excellent. There is also a program offering IRC across your network and one or two for maths practice. If you want to know more, get in touch with me or check his website at web.ukonline.co.uk/andy.mitchell2/contents.htm - he tells me that their server is case-sensitive so make sure it is all lower case.

Fonts

Which brings me (rather neatly) to this issue's fonts. If all goes well and the gremlins are kept at bay, this should be in ITC Caslon 224. Produced by Ed Benguiat in 1983, it is known for its clean lines and large X-height and is a good modern version of Caslon. William Caslon (1692-1766) is considered to have been the first English typefounder. I am indebted to Peter the Printer for his help with this information - and his cheerful patience as I try to function in his world!

Season's Greetings

Last but not least, Happy Christmas to you all! We hope to post a few Christmas animations on the school site - which now has a new name - www.ackworth.w-yorks.sch.uk so please drop by.

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TRAINING WEEKEND FEEDBACK!

by Lesley Smith

Feeling alone and isolated in my struggle to keep pace with the developments in IT (does this strike a chord with other IT co-ordinators/ heads of IT?) I was pleased to receive details of a training weekend run by RMUG. OK, so the leisure facilities and the posh hotel were an added attraction, but who else was going to offer me an action packed weekend with time and expert help to get to grips with the ideas and software that I had been putting on hold for so long? Fortunately my head teacher saw the latter benefits and duly signed the cheque to accompany my application. I was now a member of the Research Machines User Group and my first magazine confirmed that there were indeed other users enjoying mutual support.

As half term approached, the attraction of the swimming pool seemed to outweigh that of the seminars - and the long queues on the M4, late on the afternoon of Friday 24th October, did little to re-kindle my enthusiasm for the work involved. I arrived tired and uncertain of where I would find the energy to make best use of what was on offer. I needn't have worried. I was greeted by members of the User Group all of whom were so welcoming. After a quick swim I felt better and joined other friendly members for a superb buffet supper. The initial keynote speech set the tone for a stimulating weekend and I hardly noticed as bedtime came and went.

The following day workshops began and each one that I attended proved to be useful and fun. My first was presented by a member of the CBI and comprised an introduction to CAD using DesignView. The tutorial gave a good insight into what can be done with such a package and enabled me to make decisions about where this important area of the IT curriculum can be covered. After an appetising lunch in the conservatory, it was time for me to fill in the gaps in my knowledge of Serif Page Plus. Our tutor expertly handled beginners alongside those who had some knowledge and I was able to pick up many useful hints and tips.

The flexible timetabling enabled me to spend the second part of the afternoon with Jason Clark from RM. We were able to talk through all the minor problems I had experienced (not important enough to ring the helpline) and Jason was able to suggest many useful strategies to overcome them. At

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the end of the surgery he went away with a number of issues to investigate and the promise that he would get back to me with the answers. Thank you Jason.

An additional session on Intranets was slotted into the only gap in the day and I had no regrets about forgoing the swimming to be a part of it. As well as picking up all sorts of useful ideas for setting up our own Intranet I was able to learn a lot about the software that would make the task less daunting.

My first committee meeting proved interesting. As with all organisations the majority of the work seems to be done by the minority and this gallant committee were on the look out for others to join their ranks. I managed to keep my head down and avoid their entreaties but others were less fortunate. (Or were they more fortunate? The committee seemed to enjoy the weekend as much if not more than the rest of us). Meeting over and time for a splendid dinner. Thank you to RM for the wine. A final speaker, at 10pm, again proved that sleep was unnecessary as he managed to entertain and educate us. The software auction that followed gave us an opportunity to purchase some bargains and support a worthy charity.

Although rumour had it that the auction did not finish until well into the night we were all up bright and early to start again the next morning. I attended an excellent session on computer control and for the first time in years I was able to get to grips with some real ways in which I would be able to introduce this into school. Experts were on hand to guide and advise and the small size of the group meant that there were no long delays in getting help. Lunch, again in the conservatory, arrived swiftly and after another opportunity to quiz RM with individual problems the weekend was over.

Driving home I was exhausted. So much had been packed into a short space of time that it was over before I knew it. Looking back I can certainly say that I learnt a lot and enjoyed every minute of it. In addition to the seminars and speeches there was the invaluable opportunity to meet others who, like myself, are trying to keep pace with the developments in IT. It is this network of help and support for each other that makes the whole idea of a user group so valuable and makes me glad that I chose to take part in the training weekend and join RMUG. Does anyone have the date for the next one?

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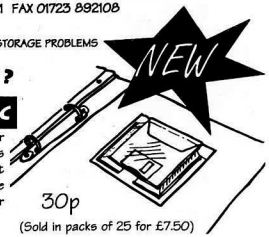

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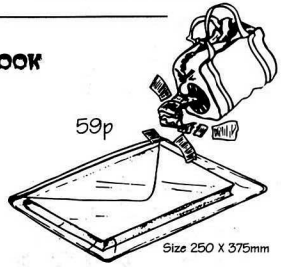

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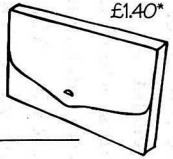

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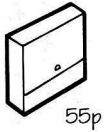

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KEYBYTES FOR WINDOWS

by Paul Coulthard

For many years I have been an avid reader of RM User magazine and have thoroughly enjoyed the vast majority of articles that have been printed without ever being excited enough about anything for me to want to 'spread the good word' and write about any specific product. Our school has just recently invested in a new product called KeyBytes for Windows, an interactive course in I.T. which has changed all that!!

In an article, 'The New Boy', in the September issue Pete Richards introduces KeyBytes and was about to place an order. I do not wish to go over the ground covered by Peter in his article except to say that I fully endorse all that he has to say. We have successfully been using KeyBytes at Gateacre Community School since it was released in September 1997.

KeyBytes is a course that consists of 17 units:

Unit A Pleased to Meet You, Unit B The Keyboard, Unit C Practice Makes Perfect, Unit D Hardware Basics, Unit E Screen Technology, Unit F Peripherals, Unit G Working with Windows, Unit H Word Processing, Unit I Spreadsheets, Unit J Databases, Unit K Graphics, Unit L Desktop Publishing, Unit M Computers Doing the Work, Unit N Computers in Daily Life, Unit O Communications, Unit P Over to You, Unit Q The KeyBytes Test.

The first thing I would like to comment on is the quality of the product. The installation instructions, worksheets, text book and the program itself all have an instant feel of quality about them, very re-assuring.

Each unit is self contained and the computer program 'tests' the students and records their scores as they progress through the units. Full class, individual student and module printouts are available. The students can re-take the tests if they wish, to hopefully improve their marks!

The computer program is well written and humour is evident throughout each module.

The modules are password protected so that students cannot access a module without the relevant password.

A module does not need to be completed in one lesson. When a student quits a module a new password is given that enables them to re-join the unit at the appropriate place.

By having to use the program, read the text book and complete the worksheets the students' interest is maintained.

If a student rushes ahead without reading the relevant section in the text book they will be caught out when they have to complete the questions set by the program. They then have to go back and read the relevant section.

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Most aspects of the program are fully configurable.

The worksheets are very well presented and the content well researched and written.

We have been using KeyBytes Standard with Y7, Y8 & Y9 and KeyBytes Plus for staff development. All the comments I have received from staff and students so far have been very complimentary.

I would thoroughly recommend this product to every I.T. teacher.

Further details and a demonstration disk are available from:

Summerfield Publishing Ltd.,
PO Box 16, Evesham,
Worcestershire, WR11 6WN.
Tel.: 01386 831642,
Fax: 01386 8311932
E-Mail:
106031.2607@compuserve.com
See ad in back of this issue

CONTROL SESSION AT TRAINING WEEKEND

by Andy Monk

For the first time in the whole weekend I was in Control. Shame it was a training session and not a state of mind.

Renewing my acquaintance with Logicator and its Technicolor flow diagram I found that, guess what, version 3 is an upgrade! When confronted with another upgrade the question that springs to mind is Why? I was happy with Version 2. I was content, almost joyful. I depended on it and they went and changed it.

Having said that, version 3 is excellent. There are no great world shattering changes but just tidying up the little details that annoy. Gone are the problems of selecting and moving cells, the combinations of keyboard and mouse commands and lack of icons. The little things that give rise to angelic voices crying 'Sir it won't go' or 'Sir it's all disappeared'.

Economatics supplied a variety of models in order for us to explore the implications of Computer Control in a real world scenario (known as playing with Lego to our less technology driven associates!)

The session was well worth the effort, as is any time where experience can be exchanged and mistakes can be made in private. The result is all sorts of new toys to show off on parents evening!

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INSIDE INFORMATION

Special Offer to help Amnesty International

Dear David,
If you could mention our offer in RM News that would be great. Last year we raised 750 pounds for Amnesty.
Disk is in the post.
Thanks ... Michael

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28 October 1997
PRESS RELEASE
from Codehigh Ltd Sedgewell House, Sedgewell Road Reading RG4 9TA
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The software, postage and packing are donated by Codehigh. So all of the 25 pounds goes straight to Amnesty. The offer closes at the end of December.
END
For a review copy or more information, please contact Michael Harper on 0118 972 4905 or email at michael@inside-information.com.

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THOUGHTS ON THE WORD-COMBINED-WITH-EXCEL TRAINING SESSION

by Paul Coleman

This session demonstrated the versatility and coolness under fire of its presenter. The server chose the opening moments of his program of events to fall over - full up to the brim ... and things got steadily worse the more Steve tried to gain control. Missing files, a sulky printer, chaotic photocopying and further ominous moves from the server all compounded to keep him busy throughout, one hand battling technology, and the other keeping everyone on task. The content of the session was interesting and thought provoking throughout with something for everyone.

You can have a lie down now Steve!

(Training Organiser: Steve took over this session only 8 days before as the original presenter backed out. Thank you Steve for stepping into the breech.)

"And his favourite saying was 'An Apple a day keeps the doctor away."

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A GLOSSARY OF IT TERMS

From ST JULIAN'S SCHOOL

Information Systems the organisation of human and other resources, including IT, into a coherent system for the storage, processing and transmitting of information

Interface the interconnection between two different systems

Laser printer a page printer that works by etching a stencil of a page to be printed on an electrostatic drum. Print is of high quality and used for camera ready art work

Line printer a printer that prints one line at a time

Local Area Network
(LAN) a network with permanent links between all the hardware connected to the network, probably within one building

Mainframe computer a large, fast computer, probably having a variety of peripherals, including a high capacity backing store and many terminals

Manual(Computing) a book containing instructions about usage

Manual do something without the use of IT

Mail merge the merging of a data file and a standard letter

Memory the part of the CPU that is used to store the programs while they are running and data while it is being processed

Menu a list of tasks which can be carried out by a computer program. The user selects a task from the menu

Model a representation of a real or imagined system. A computer based model can be created using a spreadsheet

Modem a MOdulator/DEModulator. Used to convert digital data output by a computer to analogue signals that can be transmitted along a telephone line and vice versa

Monitor a screen used to display the output from a computer

Mouse a small input peripheral having buttons on the top and a ball underneath. When the mouse is moved on a smooth surface, a pointer on screen moves to a corresponding point

Multi-access when many users are connected to a single computer

Multimedia the combination of text, sound, pictures, music and video in database type application. Often on CD-ROM

Multi-tasking when one user, on one computer, is apparently running more than one program at the same time

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Network a network is a system of connecting cables eg networks can be used to connect computers the same way as telephone networks are used to connect telephone users

Network station a terminal connected to a network

Notebook Computer a small portable computer that can be used powered by batteries

Off-line not on-line

On-line connected to a computer and in communication to it.

Operating system the operating system is a program that makes the computer hardware more easily accessible to other programs. An operating system is always present when a computer is used

Password a code that restricts access to a computer system, usually associated with user ID

Peripheral a peripheral is a hardware device that is connected to a computer system but is not part of the computer itself e.g. a printer

Point of Sale Terminal
(EPOS) a terminal used to collect data at the point of sale, often incorporates a laser scanner to read bar codes, and a dot matrix printer to print receipts

Pointer an arrow or similar symbol which appears on a monitor screen. The position of a pointer is usually controlled by a mouse

Practical suitable to a specific task

Printout the output from a printer

Program a set of instructions used to control the computer

Read Only Memory
(ROM) memory within the immediate access store that can only be read

Real-time processing the processing of input data that takes place so fast when more data is input the results of the processing are already available. Real-time processing takes place in real time i.e. as it is happening

Record record is a collection of related fields

Remote access access to a computer using a terminal located a long way from the computer

Robot an electromechanical device that can be programmed to follow a sequence of commands in order to perform a specified task

Scanner a device used to get photographs and pictures into a computer

Search look for

Secure to make safe

Sensor an input device used to sense environmental conditions like temperature and light

continued next issue

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TIP-TIME

NO MORE CLOUDY DAYS, We get lots of e-mail asking how to replace the three Windows 95 logo files, so once again, we're running our series on this technique.

Select up to three 640-by-480 bitmap files you want to use as the Windows 95 startup and shut-down screens, save the old ones—LOGO.SYS, LOGOW.SYS, and LOGOS.SYS—under new names, and size the new ones down to 320 by 400 in Paint's Stretch/Skew dialog box. Now for the easy part: saving each file under the right name, as the right type.

Open each 320-by-400 file in Paint, pull down the File menu, chose Save As, and type in the name of the screen for which you'd like to use this image—LOGO.SYS for the startup screen, LOGOW.SYS for the cloud screen you see at shut down, and LOGOS.SYS for the "It is now safe to turn off your computer" screen. Under Save as type, select 256 Color Bitmap (if it isn't already). Click on OK, and your bitmap is officially saved as one of the Windows 95 logo screens.

Repeat these steps (saving them under each of the three logo names, of course) for up to three different bitmap files. That's it. Now let's see if they work.

Ready (you did use the correct file names, right?)... get set (as long as the bitmaps are the correct size and type, there's no reason this won't work)... shut down your system. You'll see the file you saved as LOGOW.SYS first, then the LOGOS.SYS screen, to let you know you can safely turn off your computer. Now give your keyboard the ol' Ctrl-Alt-Del to restart your system, wait a few minutes, and there's that new LOGO.SYS file. Beats those clouds any day, doesn't it?

For our last tip on this topic, we'll show you a trick or two for odd-sized bitmaps.

NO MORE CLOUDY DAYS, PART 2

If you followed the instructions above, you've selected up to three 640-by-480 bitmap files you want to use as the Windows 95 startup and shut-down screens, saved the old ones—LOGO.SYS, LOGOW.SYS, and LOGOS.SYS—under new names, sized the new ones down to 320 by 400 in Paint's Stretch/Skew dialog box, and then renamed them with the above three file names. You should now have some interesting Windows 95 startup and shut-down screens.

The question is, if you have bitmaps that aren't 640 by 480, can you use those? Of course! One way is to figure out the maths to size it to 320 by 400; but if you want the easy way out, make the bitmap as close as you can to 320 by 400, then put a frame around it to make it exact.

With your image displayed in Paint (already sized to just under 320 by

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400), choose Attributes under image and change the Width and Height to 320 and 400, respectively. Click on OK, and your image, plus the white space that appears, is now a 320-by-400 image.

To center the image, choose Select All under Edit, then use the four-pointed arrow to click and drag the picture anywhere you want within the white area. Save the file as a 256 Color Bitmap named LOGO.SYS (in the root directory), LOGOW.SYS or LOGOS.SYS (both in the Windows folder), and you're all set. (Note: Be sure to save the original file under a new name first, so you don't overwrite it.) You'll see the frame when the screen appears, but who cares? You still get the picture!

MICROSOFT OFFICE If you install some of the Office 97 software onto a computer with Aimtech Jamba 1.x installed, you may overwrite MFC42.DLL with a version incompatible with the one shipped with Jamba. If this is the case, you can get the patch file AMTLIB.DLL from http://support.aimtech.com/jamba/jamba_download.html

ALPHA AND OMEGA If you ask most speech writers to tell you about the basic form of a speech, they'll tell you this: "Tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you told them." You can't go wrong using this approach.
When you start your presentation, refer to what you intend to present. And when you finish the presentation, refer to your opening remarks. By doing this, you tie the presentation together.

CD PLAYER TURNS DJ, PART 1 OF 3 Do you frequently play audio CDs on your computer? The CD Player has some neat programming options to enhance your listening experience. Just enter the title, artist, and song list for a particular CD, and the CD Player will remember this information every time you pop that CD into your CD-ROM drive. You can even select the exact songs you want to hear (or not) and the order in which you want to hear them. Today we'll show you how to enter a CD's information into the CD Player's memory.

With an audio CD in your CD-ROM drive, open the CD Player by selecting Start|Programs|Accessories|Multimedia|CD Player. Click on the far left icon (if you don't see icons, select Toolbar under the View menu) and type the CD's Artist and Title. Next, enter the names of each track. Next to Track 01 type the name of the first track, click on Set Name, and so on, until you've entered the names of all the songs. Click on OK when you're finished.

CD PLAYER TURNS DJ, PART 2 OF 3 In our last tip, we showed you how to enter an audio CD's information into the CD Player's memory: Open this utility—select Start |Programs| Accessories |Multimedia| CD Player—select Edit Play List in the Disc menu, and type in all the relevant information. Now, let's look at creating a custom Play List. Surely there are songs on that CD you could do without and those that you'll want to hear over and over. Just tell the CD Player what you have in mind, and it'll do the DJ-ing. Assuming you've already entered a CD's information, open the CD Player (with that CD in your CD-ROM drive,

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of course) and select Edit Play List under Disc. Click on the Clear All button to start with a blank slate.

In the list of Available Tracks, select the first song you want to hear and click on Add. Select the next song, click on Add, and so on until your Play List is complete. Note, too, that you can select a song as many times as you'd like or not at all. When you're finished, click on OK.

Click on the down arrow next to Track and you'll see your new play list. From now on, pressing the play button (or simply inserting the CD into your CD-ROM drive, if you have AutoPlay) plays the CD's songs in that order.

Version 4.x, 95 ALL THAT'S FIT TO PRINT Sometimes it's not easy to guess how many pages an Excel worksheet will require to print. To see how it's going to look, choose File|Print Preview. If the sheet will require more than one page, Print Preview will tell you.

If your worksheet isn't much over a single page, you can choose File|Page Setup and click on the Page tab. Select the Fit To check box and tell Excel to make it all fit on one page. Click on OK to close the dialog box and record your changes. You can see how it will look by checking Print Preview again.

Note: This is often a valid selection if the worksheet isn't much over one page. If it is larger, then the reduction may make the printout difficult to read.

Version 4.x, 95 TOWARD MORE FANCY BORDERS If you want to really make your bordered text stand out, you can add some shading. Let's say you already have some bordered text. Click inside the border and choose Format|Borders and Shading. When the dialog box opens, click on the Shading tab. Now you can select the type of shading you want to use. After you finish your selection, click on OK.

Note that you can also use the Shading dialog box to set the colors. If you use a color printer, you may want to try some colors to see how the printout looks. If you do decide to use colors, you'll soon find that Foreground doesn't refer to the text color; Foreground and Background refer to the colors that appear in your shading selection.

Version 4.x, 95 HEAD FOR THE BORDER Borders can spruce up your Word documents. Suppose you have some text that you'd like to set apart from the rest of a document. Go ahead and type in the paragraph and with the cursor set somewhere in (or at the end of) the paragraph, choose Format|Borders and Shading.

When the dialog box opens, click on the Borders tab and then click on either Box or Shadow. Click on OK and a border will appear around your paragraph.

If you decide you don't want the border, click inside the bordered paragraph, choose Format|Borders and Shading, and again click on the Borders tab. This time select None and click on OK.

RUN-NING ON EMPTY Want to delete an item from your Run list—the one that appears when you select Start, Run, and click the down arrow? All it takes is a quick trip to the Registry. (As always, back it up first: Open the

Registry Editor, select Export Registry File under the Registry menu; navigate to where you'd like to store the backup file, name the file and click on Save.)

Open the Registry Editor (select Start, Run, type "regedit" and click on OK), and navigate your way to HKEY_CURRENT_USER/Software/Microsoft/Windows/CurrentVersion/Explorer/RunMRU. In the right pane, right-mouse click on the letter (in the Name column) next to any item you'd like to remove from the list, and select Delete. Click on Yes in the dialog box that pops up, and the item is gone. Repeat these steps to delete any other items [just make sure not to delete "MRUList" or "(Default)"]. Close the Registry Editor, restart Windows 95, and check out your slimmed-down Run list.

Version 4.x, 95 DEALING WITH FRACTIONS You can enter fractions into an Excel cell and use them in your calculations. The only problem is that you have to be careful about how you enter fractions. For example, if you enter

5/6

and press Enter, Excel will think you're entering a date and convert the number to the current date format. So, 5/6 becomes something like 6-May.

To get around this problem, make a habit of entering fractions in the form zero, space, the fraction. It should look like this:

0 5/6

Now Excel knows you want to enter a fraction and will deal with the number correctly.

MORE ON FRACTIONS Although Excel converts fractions to decimals in order to calculate them, it will report results as the nearest fraction.

To check this, enter into cell A1 the fraction

0 3/32

In cell A2, enter

0 2/16

and in cell A3 enter

0 5/72.

Now move to cell A5 and enter

=SUM(A1:A3)

and press Enter. The result should be 2/7.

You can often gain some accuracy by clicking on the sum (cell A5 in this case) and then choosing Format|Cells. When the dialog box opens, click on the Number tab and then choose up to three digits and click on OK. In this case, using a three-digit fraction results in the number 83/288.

If accuracy is the most important consideration, click on the formula cell (A5), choose Format|Cells, and select Number. Now you can select the number of digits to use and click on OK. We selected four digits, which resulted in 0.28819 in cell A5.

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Microsoft's Dial-Up Networking Upgrade This upgrade provides additional features for the Dial-Up Networking ("DUN") support that was first delivered in Windows 95. It also includes all of the features of the ISDN Accelerator Pack for Windows 95, including support for internal ISDN adapters, multilink support for the two ISDN channels, and connection-time scripting to automate non-standard login connections. In addition to the features of the first upgrade, this upgrade also delivers PPTP client capability for Windows 95. To learn more about the new features and PPTP, click on the link to Microsoft in the Author field.

This upgrade requires the Winsock upgrade from Microsoft. You can install the Winsock upgrade at http://www.microsoft.com/ntserver/info/PPTPdownload1.htm

This upgrade will replace your existing TCP/IP stack. If applications that use a TCP/IP stack stop working, you will have to re-install those applications.

SHAPELY TEXT IN POWERPOINT In Freelance you can add comic book-type text balloons to a slide. You can do the same with PowerPoint, but the procedure and the nomenclature aresomewhat different.

In PowerPoint, click on Autoshapes|Callout and choose from one of the offerings. Draw the object using the mouse and then add the text. Now right-click on the object and choose Format Autoshape. When the dialog box opens, click on the Colors And Lines tab. Select the fill color, line color, style, etc. After you make all your selections, click on OK to close the dialog box and save your changes.

If the arrow points the wrong way, select the object and choose Rotate or Flip. From the submenu, choose the desired action.

GHOST ARTIST PowerPoint 97 offers you a semi-transparent option. To use this, the object you want to apply this to must be a PowerPoint object. So select the object and choose Draw|Ungroup. Now choose Draw|Group to put it back together. Now, right-click the object and choose Format Object. When the dialog box opens, click the Colors and Lines tab, then select the Semitransparent check box. Click OK to close the dialog box and put your option into effect.

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INTERAARGH!

by Diana Rolf

HEALTH WARNING: these sites are likely to have a detrimental effect on your health if you have a weak stomach, gelatinous knees or a mental age greater than 7 and a half years...
Sometimes I scare pretty easily (have you seen the prices of Armani nowadays?) so I don't usually watch horror films unless a) accompanied by a minimum of 3 people, and b) I don't have to switch any lights off afterwards. So I was curious to see if a trip to some of the famous horror web sites would have a similar effect. Well, having just tottered back, it was all pretty ghastly. If you are planning such a trip yourself, take plenty of strong black coffee and be prepared for lots of black backgrounds, red writing and fuzzy scanned images of video covers...
First stop was Hellraiser at http://pages.prodigy.com/hellraiser/hell.htm which is the one about the guy with the nails and the *really* bad hair day. Fine for video fans with strong colour vision - the murky Visited Links don't show up too well, but there are plenty of covers and some neatly printed cast lists for those who might want to have a dab at reading.
On to David Cronenburg at http://www.netlink.co.uk/users/zappa/cronen.html which is devoted to the work of the film director. It features a 'New Flesh Directory' with very wrinkly backgrounds (suggestive of rather elderly flesh), and plenty of links to other sites, films and interviews. The Image Archive lists, *inter alia*, a category called 'groovy pics' (oh dear). Viewing is slow, but unable to resist "the exploding head in 4 easy stages" I was presented with a set of small, grainy b/w photos of a Monty Python-type gent in a morning suit and white gloves, with what at first glance looks like a series of oddly shaped hats ...
Monster Mayhem at http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/2084/ has a cheery picture of the writers with monstrous beer-bellies, resplendent in skull-bedecked t-shirts, swilling cans at a party. Plenty of links to 'Classic Monsters' like Frankenstein and Dracula, and even some passages quoted from the books (who says web designers don't read?).
It has to be said that The Cabinet of Dr.Casey at http://www.cat.pdx.edu/~caseyh/horror/ is something special. It's one of the "click here to open" sites, which starts with a blank screen adorned with a plain purple link. The cool effect of the opening screen soon erupts into a profusion of awards, including the coveted 'Top 5%', and consequent tributes and congratulations to various contributors, which give the site, although very good, a slightly hysterical feel. Plenty here, though, easy to navigate, and so good you can forgive the occasional lapse - the 'Horror Poster Archive' title screen (more video covers) features an awful snap of a uniformed school-boy with ping-pong eyeballs in apparent terror of his pet gerbil. The section on Horror Literature

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includes 'Horror stories from people on the Internet' - not, as you might expect, transcripts from the Demon telephone help-line but stories written in by the public, with invitations to visitors to have a stab, as it were.
Jim Rodkey's Hammer House of Horror at http://www.leba.net/~jrodkey/hammer01.html is another film-based site with an 'open the box' device and a convincing Hammery logo, but is still partly "under constuction" [*sic*]. The Hammer Glamour section (presumably to feature the bevy of beehive hairdos and naughty nighties on leave from the Sixties Carry-on films, which date from about the same period) has yet to appear, but there are good filmographies of Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee.
For horror of a different kind try The Poisoned Web Page at http://www.csn.net/~stephenl/ which opens with a warning link to the Disney site at http://www.disney.com/ for "those who are easily offended". Well, I am pretty easily offended by pink plastic castles and soulful skunks, but I resisted the invitation to escape to Disney and instead found plenty to offend on the Poisoned Web itself, with a section on Serial Killers, the scarlet pages of which even feature a recent entry on Andrew Cunanan (Versace), as well as Bizarre Stories, Sound Shop, and a Guest Book. The section on Humor has screens full of jokes about Blondes (US-speak for Essex Girls):

Why do Blondes drive VWs?
Ans: Because they can't spell PORSCHE
What's a Blonde's favorite wine?
Ans: "Da-a-addy, I wanna go to Mia-a-ami!"
What do you do if a Blonde throws a hand grenade at you?
Ans: Pull out the pin and throw it back.

Also 'Yo Momma' jokes, like:

Yo Momma so fat she got her own area code
Yo Momma so fat she put on lipstick with a paint-roller;

and "Why Motorcycles are better than men/women" jokes, like (for women):

If baldness occurs, you can replace the tyres
Motorcycles don't snore

or, (for men)
Motorcycles don't have parents
You can't get diseases from Motorcycles you don't know very well.
So if you're a Last Outpost of the Politically Incorrect; have difficulty telling the difference between machinery and live-in companions; or are merely doomed for whatever reason to spend an evening with the local rugby team, this site is a must. At the end of each page is a skeletal hand which indicates "Back to Humor Page". You wish!

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THE INTERNET REVOLUTION

by John Simkin

Imagine being able to send photographs of life in Britain in the 1990s to people living at the end of the 18th century. They would have great difficulty in working out what was going on in these pictures. However, there is one photograph they would understand. A photograph of a school classroom. Although most people living in the 18th century would not have had first-hand experience of being a student, they would be able to make sense of a picture of children sitting at desks, faced by a teacher standing at the front on a blackboard. This is a scene that has hardly changed over the last two hundred years, but during the next few years this situation will be completely transformed.

Some teachers will rightly say that they have heard all this all before. They will remember similar things being said when computers were first introduced to schools. It is true that so far computers have not had a great impact on the classroom. Enthusiasts for computer based learning have blamed a lack of government funding, inadequate training and a resistance from a conservative teaching profession. Although all these points are important, the main reason why dramatic change did not take place was that the computer, at that stage of its development, was only able to imitate more traditional methods of teaching.

In 1997 this is no longer the case. The Internet provides an opportunity to break the traditional teaching/learning model that has existed for over a thousand years. This time the people who control education will no longer be able to resist the pressure for change. They will try; recent history will provide evidence that they will succeed – but like the monks, who tried to protect scribal culture by resisting the introduction of the printing press, they are destined to fail. Whereas the invention of the printing press marked the beginning of the end of the Church's control of information, the Internet provides an opportunity for another revolution. When people realise this, they will not allow vested interests to stand it their way.

Some politicians will no doubt attempt to deal with the electronic age by calling for a return to the teaching methods used by the monks before the invention of the printing-press. They will probably use phrases such as "back to basics" in their attempt to disguise their complete inability to grasp the changes that have been taking place in our society. This obsession with memory, understandable before the arrival of the mass produced book, will surely this time be seen as preposterous in a world where people can use a computer to access information from all over the world.

Teachers will feel threatened by these new developments. They are right to think they are being de-skilled. It is not a pleasant experience to have your status, expertise and qualifications undermined and your knowledge and values questioned. This problem can only be tackled in a strategy that

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involves extensive in-service and a secure environment where teachers do not feel that the government intend to use this situation to reduce their wage-bill and to remove unwanted teachers.

The introduction of the Internet will not replace teachers but it will change their role. As David Loader, a teacher in Melbourne who has embraced this new technology, pointed out in a recent article, Resourcing the Future: "it is not about training teachers to use computers in specific ways so that they can train their students to do likewise... Teachers have to learn... to stand back from their practices and see what elements are still their exclusive responsibility and which the students can assume." Roy Jackson, a lecturer at Kent University, agrees with Loader: "If anything, computers make teachers even more important: having access to what can be a bewildering amount of information requires careful guidance from professional educators."

If the government does not help teachers to change, the students will. As Dale Spender points out in her book Nattering on the Net: Women, Power and Cyberspace: "It's not good enough for kids any more. It's a teaching/learning model that is out of synch with the rest of the world. Many of today's students can tell you in no uncertain terms just how "unreal" (and boring, and silly) the educational context is. Traditional educational theory, practice and organisation are each day becoming more irrelevant and unworkable: just as the scribal model became obsolete after print was invented... Teaching students to store information in their heads – and to recall it on demand, on certain days of the year, with pen and paper, and then to label them correct or incorrect, is neither a valid nor a useful activity in the computer era."

Up until recently our means of communication encouraged passivity. Books, television programmes, videos and CD ROMs, are all closed information systems. The power that the user has to interact with this information is severely limited. The Internet works in a completely different way. The Internet is more than just a multimedia system that gives students access to a library database of text, video and sound, on-line. What is revolutionary is the power that it gives them to interact with this information. As Peter Lyman of the University of Southern California has pointed out: "When students use information on-line... we can no longer describe (them) as readers because in an important sense they are authors."

Let me give you a practical example of how this works. Recently I created a database of information, 'The Emancipation of Women: 1860-1920', for my Y11 GCSE History group. The database includes three linking sections: (1) Biographies of thirty-five women who played a prominent part in the struggle for women's rights. (2) A database of written primary sources produced by, or about, the thirty-five women. (3) A database of visual images that reflect the different views on women's rights between 1860-1920. Each student is then given the name of one of these women to research. They of course are not restricted to 'The Emancipation of Women' database. Each biography includes links to other sites. They can go to the 'Victorian Women Writers Project' website at Indiana University (http://

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www.indiana.edu/~letrs/vwwp-about.html) where they can read the articles and pamphlets that these women produced. Others visit 'Fales Library' in New York (http:www.nyu.edu/library/bobst/research/fales/coll) where they can look at the letters, diaries and photographs of British suffragettes like Elizabeth Robins and Octavia Wilberforce. The 'Women's History Project' website in California (http://www.nwhp.org) is another popular place for them to visit. This website provides links with a whole range of sites dedicated to providing information on the struggle for women's rights. This often leads them to other sites that help them obtain background information on the women they are writing about. For example, the founders of the Women's Political and Social Union came from Manchester. Those researching those women will end up at Mitsuhari Matsuoka's 'Manchester' website (http://lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/~matsuoka/Manchester.html) at Nagoya University. I know it might sound strange, but at the moment, the best website on Manchester is in Japan. But distance is not a problem for students on the Internet.

After researching their project the students share the information that they have discovered with the rest of the class. In doing so they are able to explore the links between the individual women and to look at themes such as their experiences as children, as wives and mothers, in further education, at work and as members of different women's organisations.

Students do not only collect information from sites on the Internet. Each site has an e-mail facility and this gives them the opportunity to engage in a debate about the material, or in some cases, the lack of material. For example, when they visit the websites of the two institutions (Fawcett Library and the London Museum) that control the papers produced by the two main women's organisations involved in the fight for the vote (NUWSS and WSPU) they will discover that virtually none of this material is available on-line. Hopefully, if these institutions get enough e-mails from angry GCSE students they might rectify this situation.

I know that since our website has been online (http://www3.mistral.co.uk/spartacus) I have received a stream of e-mails from students all over the world. These range from Hilary Hayes of Maryland who wanted help with her essay on 'Women's Rights in Modern Europe' to a relative of Eva Gore Booth, who wanted to know why she had been left out of the 'Emancipation of Women' database.

My Y9 history group is currently producing an encyclopaedia on the First World War. Each student is responsible for one entry. By 1998 we should have over a thousand pages of information on the First World War that will be freely available to the Internet community. One section of the encyclopaedia involves a study of the impact that the war had on the town where the children live. We are currently in the process of trying to find schools in other European countries to join the project. It will then be possible for students to compare the experiences of people from both sides of the conflict.

The 'A' level Sociology students in my school have their own website where

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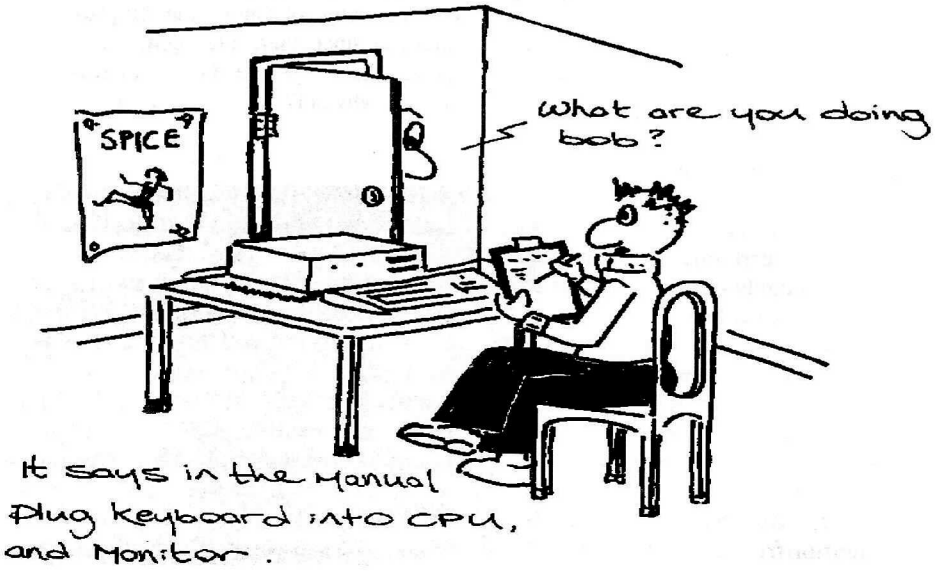
they publish details of their research. Recently they carried out a major investigation into underachievement at GCSE. This study involved the students carrying out in-depth interviews, collecting data from questionnaires and analysing autobiographical accounts of students who had just received their GCSE results.

One of the major reasons why the students put so much effort into the research was the knowledge that the results of the study would be published. The Internet has made them teachers as well as learners. As Dominic Stansberry pointed out in his book Taking the Plunge, the Internet makes possible "a system of inquiry in which the student is immersed in hands-on, real world situations and asked to provide the solutions."

The world students will be able to take part in what Parker Rossman calls in his book The Emerging, Worldwide, Electronic University, "global collaboratories" where people can meet in cyberspace and freely exchange information. My students are making their contribution to what is becoming a global reference library of information. However much some will try to stop this happening, this is fast becoming a reality. The relationship between teacher and student is changing for good. The real issue is not whether it will happen, but when. The answer to that question depends to a large extent on government policy. The publication of the consultation document 'The National Grid for Learning' is the government's opening move. Let us hope it is quickly followed by the policies that are needed to make Britain the educational centre of the twenty-first century.



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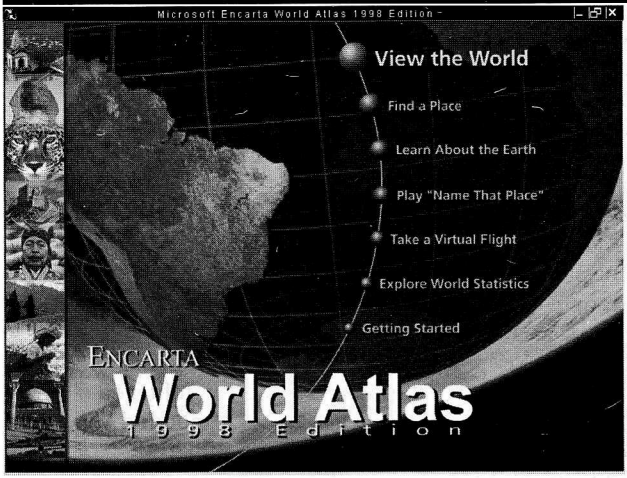
WORLD ATLAS FROM MICROSOFT

by David Palmer

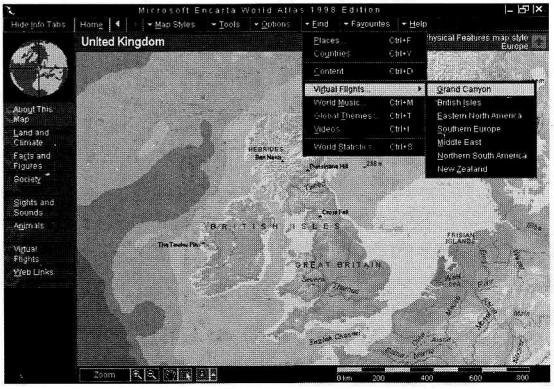


As I think you might see - and as I think you would expect, this program is visually gorgeous!! The interface is also very nice - along the lines of Encarta - with menus that (can) automatically hiss out as the mouse passes by. There are also the expected plethora of resources. You can view maps in all the usual formats, physical, economic etc, with a variety of zooms. Then there are the extra formats such as satellite views by day and night.

The most interesting statistic - and one which I certainly failed to explore thoroughly - is that there are 9,000 place related Internet links!

There are loads of statistics to troll through and there are some extra resources which must surely have come from the Encarta goody box. These include musical sounds from different countries, video clips from around the world and a controllable simulated flight through a few well known sites such as the Pyranees and the Grand Canyon. Finally there is a quiz game which proved popular with my young field testers.

I cannot say that my admiration is unbounded however! The zooms are not the same with each kind of map and if you swap from one view to another, you often end up with a different view. The quiz does have different levels - but you are not offered a choice until you have completed the first round of 20 questions. If you get a questions right it plays a tiny bit of music which appears to be selected at random - why not connect the sound to the question since there are such resources already there. If you get it wrong there is no sound - why not?



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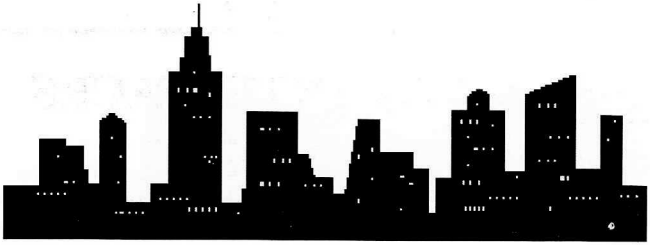

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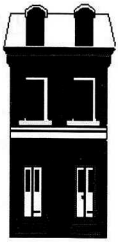

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PRINTER'S PIE

by Peter Harris

A JAM OF INTERFACES

Symphony No. 2

O'Malley, an American writer, once said: "An Englishman thinks seated; a Frenchman, standing; an American, pacing; an Irishman, afterward!" But perhaps it is not as simple as that!

I am passionately fond of the six symphonies of Carl Nielsen. I regard his 5th Symphony, with its insistent snare drum figure, as one of the great symphonies of the twentieth century. His great contemporary, Jean Sibelius of Finland, wrote symphonies in which Man is a mere figure in a land of long, hard winters and short but brilliant summers. They remind me of Sir Winston Churchill, who tells how during the Second World War after evening conferences at Chequers he would step into the garden, look up at the stars and gain a sense of perspective.

Carl Nielsen's symphonies, on the other hand, deal directly and boldly with human experience. The second, subtitled "The Four Temperaments," reflects the way the ancients perceived us interfacing with our environment and one another: Allegro collerico, Allegro comodo e fiemmatico, Andante malincolico, Allegro sanguineo.

On one occasion, when walking to his publishers in Copenhagen with the only copy of a new string quartet under his arm, he stopped to give assistance to a lady who had been in an accident, first handing the manuscript to an onlooker. Unfortunately the onlooker disappeared and Carl Nielsen had to write the string quartet again. I told this story to a graphics designer friend of mine who had just lost a twenty-page full-colour brochure owing to a damaged hard drive – it didn't cheer him up! Thomas Carlyle had a similar problem with a maid who put his manuscript of THE FRENCH REVOLUTION on the fire.

MBTI

In the world of business and commerce two-and-a-half million people every year take the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* personality inventory; the four possible combinations help them to understand themselves and other people.

Sensing plus Thinking – ST people rely primarily on sensing for purposes of perception and thinking for purposes of judgement. Their main interest focuses on facts. They find success in the fields of economics, law, business, accounting etc.

Sensing plus Feeling – SF people rely primarily on sensing for purposes of perception, but they prefer feeling for purposes of judgement. They approach their decisions with personal warmth, and make good teachers!

Intuition plus Feeling – NF people share the same personal warmth as SF people but do not centre their attention upon the concrete situation – they tend to focus on possibilities. They are both insightful and enthusiastic. They tend to excel in high school teaching, advertising, research and writing.

Intuition plus Thinking – NT people also use intuition but couple it with thinking. Although they focus on a possibility, they tend to be impersonal but logical and ingenious.

Extroverts and *Introverts* may have any of the above four combinations of perception and judgement.

Human beings are certainly complicated in the way they interface with one another!

1974 and all that

On a recent visit to this country, Bill Gates (who during the last financial year was 15 million dollars richer every morning when he

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came down to breakfast) flew into London on his own and drove a hired car himself from the airport. This disdain for some of the trappings of wealth probably goes back to his early days when he sometimes worked for three or four days on the trot, just stopping for a snack or a nap.

Before 1974 no interface was available for any computer other than for a main-frame. COBOL and FORTRAN were not suitable languages. Bill Gates and his often-forgotten two-years-older friend Paul Allen happened to be in the right place at the right time with the right gifts – they were experts in BASIC, taking the language to its limits.

Micro-Soft (the hyphen disappeared later) got 30 dollars for each operating system they placed on the machines of their first contract. It was a four-million-dollar company when IBM (a 30-billion-dollar company) signed an agreement for MS-DOS. Within ten years Microsoft had become bigger than IBM. Computers double their power and speed roughly every two years, and Bill Gates had a vision that software was always going to be more important than hardware.

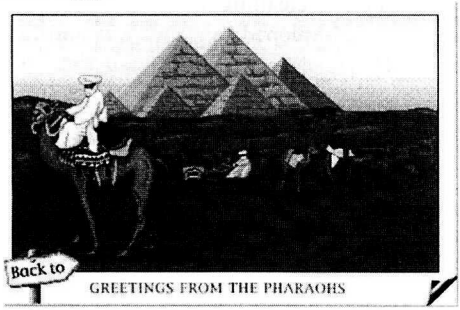
The mathematics of evolution can be applied to the history of invention and technology. By 1929 in America the hundreds of companies that started up with the invention of the internal combustion engine had become forty-four and the Big Three of General Motors, Ford and Chrysler had already established themselves.

In the start-up days of Silicon Valley, Steve Jobs and Steve Woznieck (who established Apple Computers) were but two of thousands who worked from garages and small workshops. In 1985 Bill Gates wrote a letter to Apple pointing out to them the advantages of being a software company only, and offering them Microsoft's expertise to help them establish a clone industry for Apple Macs. They did so a decade too late!

COMPUTER SHOPPER tells two tales of where a keyboard interface lends itself to mistakes. A supplies clerk in the middle of the Colorado desert ordered a jeep headlamp, reference number 4972. Unfortunately he keyed in 4772, which meant that a giant transporter brought a seven-ton battleship anchor! A keystroke error was made by a Russian operator who sent a 27-line message to the Phobos-1 Mars probe, with a single character omitted in the form of a hyphen. The machine received the message and obeyed; the solar panels turned away from the sun; and the probe became the most expensive piece of junk in history.

Work is Love made visible

To write a letter of thanks is sometimes hard work, but when my four-year-old grandson wanted to say thank-you to his eighty-seven-year-old great-grandma he sent her a postcard from Egypt.



Dear grandma,
Thank you for the presents.
From patrick

Address
Grandma Harris

I find the interface of the Dorling Kindersley Multimedia CD-ROM "My First Amazing World Explorer" extremely well thought out for the age group four to nine years, combining facts with games and puzzles on the subject of maps and geography. The main interface uses the metaphor "My Bedroom" with the map of the world hung on the wall. Other features such as printing are accessed from "Suitcase."

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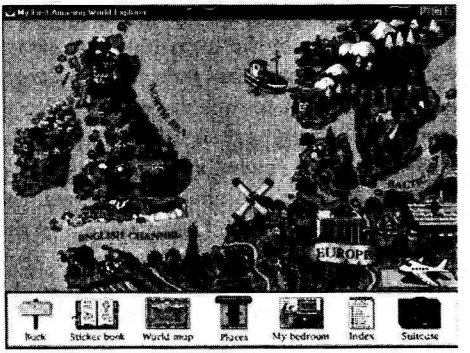

If grandfathers are not computer-literate then the generation gap will be bigger than before!

Soap

To go into PC WORLD and order SOAP seems a rather strange thing to do, but fortunately the assistant realised that I was referring to a programme for cleaning up photographs – a programme developed by Kai Kraus and his team at MetaTools (some of you may have used his POWER GOO).

A story is told of Mozart (who seems to have been always in a rush) that when he was due to play a new specially-commissioned Violin Sonata, only on the day before the concert did he find time to write down the violin part in manuscript form – the piano part he had to play from his head! In the recapitulation section of the last movement of his "Jupiter" symphony (written along with Symphonies No. 39 and No. 40 in the astonishingly short space of three months) six completely different tunes are all played at the same time, yet such is Mozart's mastery that the music blends effortlessly together. Only an analysis of the written score reveals the complex harmony and counterpoint.

To compare Kai Kraus to Mozart may seem far-fetched but I was struck by the same feeling of complexity being hidden underneath the interface of SOAP as under the surface of many great works of art.

In our last issue I attempted to explain how we in the printing and graphics industries use ADOBE PHOTOSHOP to improve and clean up photographs. SOAP enables the man-in-the-street to achieve similar results but uses a much simpler and far more intuitive approach. The CD-ROM contains both a Windows version and an Apple Mac version (which only runs using the PowerPC chip). If you're using a Cyrix processor, MetaTools (now MetaCreations) supplies a software fix on its Web site.

When SOAP starts it uses the metaphor of seven different "rooms", with each room having a purpose like the rooms in a house. The intention (for the most part achieved) is to make image adjusting follow logical steps. Each tool is only available when you need it for that particular step, and the tools are different from those seen in other image-manipulation programmes. For example, when you use the brush its bristles bend and it casts a shadow on your picture. When not in use it can be placed anywhere on the table.

The first room is the "In Room." Here you choose a picture to work on, scatter your photographs on the table, or place them in albums.

In the "Prep Room" you can rotate or crop your picture to size. An "Enhance" button automatically corrects a colour cast or an exposure problem in a similar way to the Intellihance filter in PHOTOSHOP.

The "Tone Room" allows you to alter light and shade, as well as the red, green and blue controls on the Tone Equaliser.

The "Colour Room" allows you to adjust overall balance using the main controls, but more detailed adjustments can be made using the twelve bands of the Colour Equaliser.

The "Detail Room" is where you can get rid of imperfections in the picture such as tears, creases or dust. You can also alter the sharpness of the image and clone various sections.

In the "Finish Room" you can add clipart, text, backgrounds and fancy borders; and the "Out Room" is where you can save or print your image.

I find the interface satisfying and logical, once I had got used to a different way of thinking.

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WINDOWS 98 (Beta Version)

60% of firms with more than 1,000 computers are still using Windows 3.11 – if they wish to change to Windows 98 they will need to install on a freshly-formatted Hard Disk. The estimated 132 million users of Windows 95 will be able to upgrade using the Windows 98 CD.

The computer industry's growth was first fuelled by the military, then by business and now by the entertainment industry. For the most part the world of business has already got the computers it needs, but if you want to play the latest games on a PC you need a 3Dfx accelerator card, a steering wheel or a joystick with feedback, and pedals for braking and gear-changing. Innovations such as Universal Serial Bus, the IDEE 1394 bus, the FAT32 file system and Digital Video Disc are all propelling PC usability upward and onward; Windows 98 provides built-in support for these and other hardware and software improvements.

If William James were to re-write his classic book THE VARIETIES OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE (a scientific study of the phenomenon of conversion) he could now include Bill Gates – from being a sceptic about the Internet he overnight realised its potential and put 2000 of his best programmers to design a Web Browser.

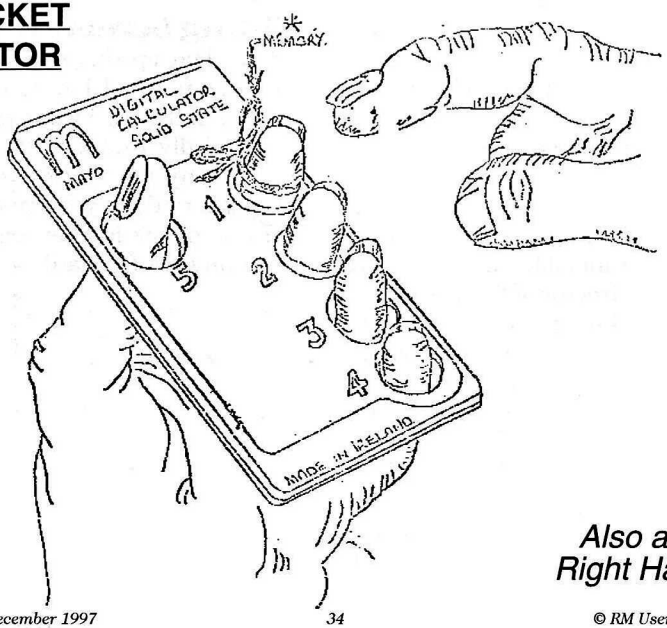
The biggest change from Windows 95 is that the Internet and "My Computer" are now integrated (that is if the US Department of Justice allow I.E.4 to ship with Windows 98). In addition to a toolbar and an address bar there is also a Favourites menu, as in a normal Web browser programme.

The Back and Forward arrows on the toolbar also work as those of you who go on the Net would expect, but they now include entries for hard drives and folders.

A very useful feature is the thumbnail view, an extra viewing mode that shows graphics files (in GIF and BMP format) and Web pages as small previews. Windows 95 could do some of this but you had to take time and effort to load the extra files from the Windows 95 CD.

Find has new entries for **On the Internet** and **People. On the Internet** opens Explorer at the search page and **People** opens a dialogue box especially designed for searching the various "yellow pages" on the Net.

IRISH POCKET CALCULATOR



Also available in Right Hand Model

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SHOPTALK

by David Palmer

Weird Scenes '97

I had the strangest experience installing a zip drive. Basically, I missed a step - working in a hurry - and got locked out. After several restarts - I seem to spend an inordinate amount of time watching startups these days - I realised that even starting in safe mode and restarting was not helping. When started up, the machine would start the little arrow across the taskbar to the Start button and then freeze. (Is it me or is the appearance of that little arrow rather sporadic?) I decided that it was the last part of the zip drive setup program that was making it crash. Does anyone know where this post-restart instruction 'lives'? I thought it might be temporarily written into the 'Run' section of win.ini so I started in safe mode and looked but couldn't find it. However, a little imp woke up and suggested that I might change the shell from explorer to progman. I did and it worked. I then reran the zipdrive setup from scratch, restarted and then set the shell back to explorer.

Tick, tick

I had been working on what looked like a charmed timetable this term. We have a new Director of Studies and he hadn't slotted in my 6th form lessons so I had a lot of space apparently available. However, partly due to 'losing' my phone, I have been sinking even more quickly than usual into a state of chaos! Of course it's all Fred Whipp's fault for explaining so lucidly to us last year how firmly the deck is stacked against us. I wish I had a tape of his excellent, witty presentation. When I stagger away from the chaos of work I reach the chaos of home, kid's homework, car trouble etc. Finally, sometime around 10, a sort of peace descends on the house, the phone slows to about 1 ring per 15 minutes and I crank up the laptop to write something for you . . . . and I glance at the one-eyed monster in the corner and I am lost! I have become a great fan of American football - and a whole range of other late night programs. It is all so slick and so easy to watch. When I am at work, I find it harder to prioritise. I look at the great piles of stuff-to-do and usually end up working on making Windows 95 do what I think it should do. I should really be working on my risk assessment form and my register of tested electrical equipment but it all seems so tedious!

Tilting Screen

I have laid up this issue on a super monitor from ADI which swivels to show a full page in portrait in great detail. Sadly, they have decided not to import any more of these beasts (it weighs a ton!). If you want to try and get one of the last few call0181 236 0801 and ask for Matthew.

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GOT A PROBLEM?

One of the main functions of the RM User Group is to assist members who are having problems with either hardware or software, no matter how trivial or complex that problem seems to be. Members of the committee have a wide range of experience in the use of RM equipment, including systems no longer in production, and can be contacted in the evenings or at weekends...times when you are most likely to be mulling problems over and when RM's own Customer Support lines are unavailable.

RM themselves do not claim to have extensive knowledge of products which they don't produce themselves (such as Excel or Page Plus), and although they can tell you how to install such packages on their equipment and how to get started, they cannot be expected to give you in-depth support in using them. On the other hand, the RM User Group has a membership drawn almost exclusively from teachers using these products on a daily basis and consequently have probably "been there, done that, bought the T-shirt" and most likely even "made the jigsaw" too.

So do get in touch with a member of the Committee (see elsewhere in the magazine for contact details) if you are experiencing some difficulty or other or want some advice. If we can't solve the problem ourselves then we probably know someone who can, and if even that fails we can publicise the problem in the RMUG Magazine.

GOT ANY HINTS AND TIPS? GOT ANY GOOD TEACHING IDEAS INVOLVING IT?

If so, your magazine needs you! Look...it's like this: the RMUG magazine is entirely dependent upon contributions from members to fill its pages. This means you! We know for a fact that some members shy away from contributing articles because they feel themselves not to be experts. Don't kid yourselves: if you've done an interesting lesson in your subject from an IT point of view, then you're an expert and we'd like to hear about what you did. What you write doesn't have to have high "nerd appeal"...in fact, forget the "anoraks" completely because most members are normal people like you. Honest.

The editor welcomes all manner of items from "one-liners" to classroom ideas and software reviews, so get writing and make his day (he'll even pay £5 per printed page if he likes it.....Just think: two two-page articles and you've got your annual membership fee back.....).

If (If? When, surely?) you do write an article then the best thing is to submit it to the editor as a disk file in Word for Windows or Windows Write format. He's a reasonable chap so other word processor formats are probably OK too, but it would be worth checking first in case he hasn't got a copy of Edlin Lite for Windows 95. Alternatively you can e-mail it to him or sharpen a few goose quills (but please not carrier pigeons: they just make too much mess).

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If you object to your details being passed on to other members of the user group, please check this box ☐

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KEYBYTES FOR WINDOWS

(previously announced as

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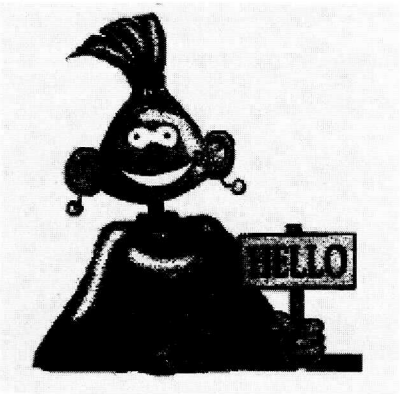

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Or contact Sally Nightingale for a demonstration pack

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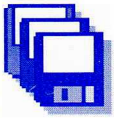
version 2.1
now available



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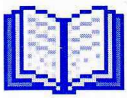
available soon



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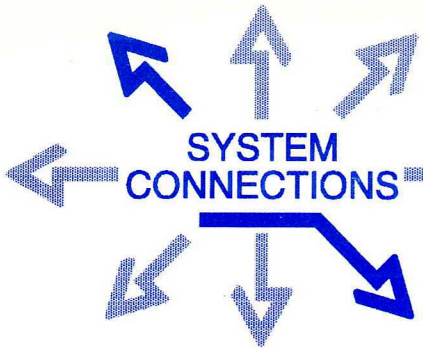

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